

HERMAN FARM, HOUSE
North side of Showalter Road, 0.3 miles
east of I-81, at Washington County
Regional Airport
Hagerstown vicinity
Washington County
Maryland

HABS No. MD-993-A

HABS
MD,
22-WASHINGTON,
3-A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HERMAN FARM, HOUSE
~~(Schindel Farm)~~

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Location: North side of Showalter Road, 0.3 miles east of I-81, at Washington County Regional Airport, Hagerstown vicinity, Washington County, Maryland

USGS Hagerstown, MD Quadrangle
UTM Coordinates: 18 265820 4398060

Present Owner: Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Maryland

Present Occupant: Unoccupied.

Present Use: Unused.

Significance: Dated October 16, 1860, this farmhouse is an excellent documented example of a prosperous farmer's dwelling which has remained to the present with only minimal alterations. The major significance of the house lies in the excellent documentation that establishes its construction date, for whom it was built and a thorough description in an advertisement of its appearance at 28 years after construction when it was sold. The fact that the major architectural elements of the house have remained untouched enhance the house's value as an indicator of a prosperous farmer's life style and mind set. The general architectural character of the house is typical of the region's mid 19th century rural domestic buildings.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Cornerstone inscribed "OCTOBER TH 16 1860".
2. Architect: unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Following is the chain of title for the Herman property:

Reference to the Chain of Title to the land upon which the Herman Farmhouse stands are found in the Land Records office, Washington County Court House, Hagerstown, Maryland.

1853 Deed, April 12, 1853, recorded in volume IN7, p. 613.
Samuel Brumbaugh and others
To
George Herman.

Deed, April 12, 1853, recorded in volume IN7, p. 614.
William Logan
To
George Herman.

1892 Deed, November 19, 1892, recorded in volume 99, p. 416.
Henry Herman, executor for George Herman, deceased
To
William Sperow.

1900 Deed, March 31, 1900, recorded in volume 112, p. 355.
William O.B. Sperow
To
Moab Showater.

1917 Deed, March 31, 1917, recorded in volume 151, p. 20.
Moab Showalter

To
Alvah Showalter.

1945 Deed, October 1, 1945, recorded in volume 231, p. 490.

Alvah Showalter and Katie B. Showalter
To
Henson Flying Service, Inc.

1948 Deed, September 8, 1948, recorded in volume 248, p. 665.

Henson, Inc.
To
Richard Henson.

1950 Deed, November 9, 1950, recorded in volume 259, p. 539.

Richard Henson and Jane Henson
To
Joseph B. Schindel and Madeline Schindel.

Recent deed transactions record the sale of the property from Joseph Schindel to Fairchild Industries, Inc., an airplane manufacturer, in 1976, and then to the Board of County Commissions of Washington County which owns the Washington County Regional Airport.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: No information has been located regarding the builder or contractor for the house, or for suppliers of materials.
5. Original plans and construction: No plans, contracts, early drawings or views have been located of this house. An 1888 description of the Herman farm in the form of an advertisement of sale has been quoted in its entirety, in the overview report, HABS No. MD-993. Describing the house 28 years after it was built, the sale bill characterizes it as a "mansion," a "large, solid brick" building containing nine rooms with a "large hall running through the house". It also refers to an attached pantry, which dates the small addition to the house as having occurred before 1888 and mentions the side porches.

The house retains its original form and most details. It is L-shaped with inset two story porches along the east elevation of the rear section. There is also a one story porch along part of the west wall.

6. Alterations and additions: The few alterations and additions to this house were identified through physical evidence. The oldest addition is the small, frame pantry enclosure attached to the west elevation of the kitchen. Since this attached pantry is noted in the 1888 newspaper advertisement of sale for this property it was constructed sometime prior to 1888. Architectural trim and elements are characteristic of the late 19th century so it would appear that it was added shortly before 1888. Physical evidence also suggests that the one story west porch was extended or rebuilt about that time.

Other exterior alterations include the application of neo-colonial entrance trim in the mid 20th century and about the same time resurfacing the roof with channel drain sheet metal. The interior alterations of the circa 1950 period include the remodeling or installing of the present kitchen, bathroom, powder room and built-in closets.

B. Historical Context:

The Herman Farm House was built in 1860 by George Herman, who was described in the 1877 Atlas for Washington County as a farmer. He had come to Washington County from Pennsylvania and in 1853 began purchasing land which made up this farm. He built the barn first in 1856, and then the house which is clearly dated on its cornerstone OCT TH 16 1860. The house is an example of the conservative nature of rural domestic architecture not only of Washington County, Maryland, but the entire region which includes south central Pennsylvania from where many Washington County families like the Hermans migrated, north central Maryland as well as parts of West Virginia and Virginia. If an architectural style must label this house, it would be Greek Revival. Yet, by 1860, the Greek Revival style had largely passed from popularity. Even more indicative of the region's architectural conservatism is the application of Greek Revival style elements (evidenced in the Herman House mainly in window and door treatment) to an

even older design formula which has its roots in the 18th century Georgian stylistic tenets. The plan of the building is formal and symmetrical and is one that was used frequently in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries for farmhouses in the region. The Herman farmhouse is not unique or rare, rather it illustrates the way of life, mind set and architectural expression of the region and thus is part of its cultural history. Since the house is so well documented and so little altered, it is a particularly good representative of its type.

Part II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Built in 1860, this two story three bay brick farmhouse is typical of the conservative quality of rural domestic architecture in the area. The house has Greek Revival stylistic details mostly evidenced in the front entrance treatment and interior trim. The plan of the house is formal with a side entrance and stair hall and double parlors. An L extension to the rear has a two story galleried porch, a popular element in the region during the mid 19th century.
2. Condition of fabric: The house is generally in good to excellent condition. Some damage has occurred during the past approximately ten years, during which time the house has stood vacant.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The Herman Farmhouse is a two story, three bay building with a two story, three bay L-shaped extension to the rear. The rear extension is recessed along its east elevation. There is an earth-floor basement beneath the house, except for the portion beneath the hallway which is crawl space. The house measures 29'6" by 51'8".
2. Foundations: The foundations are of coursed local limestone with more regularly cut and coursed stones evident at the front or south elevation. A large

chisel-cut block of limestone is the cornerstone at the south end of the east elevation. It is inscribed OCT TH 16 1860.

3. Walls: The walls are of brick construction with flemish bonding at the front elevation. The side and rear elevations are laid in American or common bond with five courses of stretchers between the header rows. There are flat or jack arches above the openings. The bricks were made locally, very likely on the property or nearby as was typical of this place and time. The original finish on the bricks was a red iron oxide stain with white striping on the joints, a typical treatment for brick structure in the 19th century in this area. During the mid 20th century, the building was painted white.
4. Structural systems, framing: The structural system for the Herman Farmhouse is load bearing masonry exterior walls of solid brick knit by the bonding pattern mentioned above. Interior load bearing walls are of brick. The floor joist system runs north-south through the building in the front section and east-west in the rear extension. The joists system of the hallway runs east-west. The roof is gabled with the peak running east-west at the front section and north-south on the rear extension. All rafters are sawn, tapered with open mortise and tenon joints, and secured with pegs. Collar beams are half-dovetailed and nailed.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The front entrance to the house is now reached by a flag stone-surfaced poured concrete flag stoop which dates from CA 1950.

The original two story gallery porches are along the east elevation of the rear wing of the house. They are supported by tapered solid square posts with the upper deck enclosed by a balustrade with a rounded handrail and plain rectangular balusters. The double tier porch is included under the roof span of the rear extension to the house, along its recessed east wall. The upper porch ceiling's plastered while the lower porch has a beaded tongue and groove wooden ceiling. This is a common porch configuration of the mid 19th century in

this region.

Another porch, a one story shed roofed structure is located along the west wall of the extension against the pantry addition. It appears to be an early addition, perhaps contemporary with the pantry which was added before 1888. The porch was enclosed with screening during the mid 20th century, and widened by 26 inches.

A cellar bulkhead is located at the rear of the house along the north wall. Although the bulkhead is a mid 20th century construction, the cellar entrance location is original.

6. Chimneys: The house has three chimneys, one located inside each gable end. They are of brick and have no decorative work such as corbeling. The east end chimney serves no fireplaces and has no purpose other than to provide visual symmetry to the roof line. It is original to construction of the house.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: There are five exterior doors to the house. The main entrance is located in the east end bay of the front or south elevation. The door, transom, sidelights with panels beneath and jambs are original to the 1860 construction. The neocolonial surround with scroll pediment, finial and pilasters is an addition of ca. 1950. The original door is a notable, unusual element. Its exterior face has twelve panels set in three rows of four panels each. The upper row of panels are long, forming elongated vertical rectangles. The lower half of the door beneath a wide rail are the other two rows of panels. The second row is small and the bottom row more elongated and are beneath a narrow row. Together, the bottom two rows of panels nearly equal the length of the upper row. All of the panels are trimmed with Grecian ogee molding which is used throughout the house. However, with the exterior front door panels, at the narrow ends of each panel, the molding is cut in a curve, making each panel appear to be an oval. None of the original door hardware remains.

In the east elevation there are three doorways all opening onto the two-tiered porches there. One opens from the rear or north wall of the front portion of the house, one from the east wall of the extension and one from the second floor east wall. The two doors in the east wall have three light transoms. The upper door retains its original details with six panels arranged in pairs. The upper two panels are largest, the central pair smallest and the lower pair larger so that the two lower pairs approximately equal the size of the upper pair. The lower door in the east wall had this configuration but the upper portion of the door has been replaced with a single glass pane. The door from the north wall of the front section onto the porch retains its original paneling. It does not have a transom. None of the doors have original hardware.

The fifth exterior door is located in the north wall from the kitchen onto the north porch. It is configured like the other doors, although its upper panels have been removed and replaced with a single glass pane. It has a three light transom above it. Like most of the doors in the house, it has lost its original hardware.

- b. Windows and shutters: All elevations of the house have windows. The east elevation of the main or front section and the north or rear elevation of the extension, however, only have gable windows to light the attic. All windows with the exception of the north gable attic opening have six-over-six light double-hung sash. The windows are generally arranged symmetrically or are at least aligned with one another except at the east elevation of the extension beneath the porch where windows are placed randomly to accommodate interior spaces. Window frames are narrow with a rounded profile and mitered corners.

Most windows retain their original shutters and shutter hardware. The first story shutters are paneled with four nearly square panels arranged vertically. Upper level shutters are louvered with

fixed louvers.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof is gabled with the front section ridge running east-west and the rear extension, north-south. The current roofing material is channel-drain sheet metal of the mid-20th century.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The roof structure does not terminate flush with the end walls except at the north end of the extension where there is a flat barge board. At the gable ends of the main or front section, the roof overhangs the end walls, an original feature. The cornice at the front of the house consists of a wooden band of ogee molding. The gutters are half round galvanized steel and although not original are similar in type to the original rain water conductor system.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: The house has no dormers, cupolas or towers.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans: Please refer to sketch plans following this written documentation section.
2. Stairways: There are two stairways in the house. The main staircase is located in the north-east quarter of the entrance hall. The stair terminates with a massive walnut newel post. On a square base, its shaft is turned in an ogee form. Newel posts at the landing and upper floor levels are also turned, but small and delicate with a slight taper from bottom to top and terminate with a small round knob at the top. The walnut hand rail is round and small. It is supported by rectangular balusters, arranged two per step. There is no decorative trim at the ends of the risers. Originally a doorway in the back of the staircase gave access to a small closet. The space under the staircase was converted to a powder room, probably in the 1970s.

The second staircase is an enclosed service stair which extends from attic to basement. It winds tightly in the north-east corner of the rear extension of the house.

The stair enclosure at the first and second story levels is of random-width, beaded tongue and groove boarding. Doors to the stairway at each level have four panels each. At both the first and second story levels, the first four stair steps project into the room, while the remainder are within the stair enclosure accessed through a door. The steps that are outside the door in the first floor kitchen are edged by a two-board railing, which dates from the mid-20th century.

3. Flooring: The flooring consists of #2 heart pine, tongue and groove, random width. On the first floor, boards are approximately five inches wide and on the second floor, approximately six inches wide. Most floor boards are blind-nailed. The floors were refinished during the mid 20th century throughout the house. The kitchen floor is covered by several layers of linoleum and, most recently, carpet.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All walls and ceilings are of smooth-coated plaster, except where the rear stair enclosure forms part of the north wall, as previously described. Two recent built-in cosets on the second floor have drywall walls. The original wall finish in all rooms appears to have been calcamine paint in off-white with tints ranging from pinkish to yellowish grey. Most walls have no more than four coats of paint or wallpaper. It should be noted that calcamine paints were frequently removed between applications so that the house may have had more layers than those now visible.

Chair rail is present in only two rooms, the kitchen and dining room or back parlor. It probably remained in those rooms as a utilitarian item since chair rails had generally gone out of fashion by the 1860s. The house has no interior cornices. The baseboards throughout the house are approximately eight inches high, double fielded with a large bead at the top and a one-fourth inch separating the two fields. Twentieth century quarter round has been added to the bottom of the baseboard.

5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: All interior doors have six

panels configured with the largest pair of panels at the top, the smallest pair just below the center of the door and the third moderately sized pair at the bottom. To this basic panel configuration is applied a band of Grecian ogee molding in the parlor, first floor exterior and hallway doors. In other locations the door panels are plain. The door architraves vary from room to room. In the parlor is the most elaborate trim consisting of symmetrical bands of ogee molding separated by a squared groove or rabbet. In the upper corners of the architraves are decorated corner blocks with concentric bands of Grecian ogee molding. In the second floor front bedroom, unusual architraves are peaked or pointed at the top to give the openings a suggestion of a temple form, which is a Greek Revival style element.

In other areas the architraves are a double-fielded band trimmed with one band of Grecian ogee molding along the outer edge and a small bead at the inner edge. In the kitchen there is no molded band on the architrave and in the second floor rooms above the kitchen the molding is a plain cavetto.

First floor doors show evidence of original grain painting, except for the kitchen doors. At the second floor, doors in the front section rooms are grain painted. Those at the rear were painted grey. Architraves through the house were originally painted in varying shades of grey ranging from light dove grey in the first floor parlor to a medium charcoal grey in the rear upper story bedrooms.

- b. Windows: All windows have splayed jambs. In the prominent rooms at the first and second story the jambs are paneled with Grecian ogee molding. In the kitchen and the upper back rooms above it, window jambs are not paneled. The window architraves are the same as those described for the doors with the parlor and front second floor bedroom being more elaborate than the other rooms.

- 6. Decorative features and trim: Other decorative features not already discussed include the remaining original mantel piece in the parlor and two cupboards, a large

built-in hutch-type cupboard in the kitchen and a small narrow cupboard along the edge of what had been the second floor front bedroom fireplace. The kitchen cupboard is located in the northwest corner of the room. It has paneled doors above and below a projecting work space. Original hinges are in place and in use. Mid-20th century H-L hinges have been attached but are only decorative. The second floor fireplace cupboard is long and narrow with a single panel trimmed with Grecian ogee molding.

The mantel piece in the front parlor has tapered flat pilasters which support a frieze with raised beveled panels. The mantel shelf has a symmetrical double ogee curved profile. The firebox and hearth have been completely relined with brick in the mid-20th century.

7. Hardware: Most original hinges remain on the interior doors and cupboards in the house. They are cast iron, five knuckle butt hinges with fixed pins. Only one original knob and lock remain in the house, although profiles of early locks can be seen on several doors. The remaining one was a plain cast iron box lock with a ceramic knob. The one remaining lock was found in the second floor rear room.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The original heating system of the house was the fireplaces of which there were three on the first floor and one on the second. The fireplaces may have been adapted originally for coal grates and wood stoves, although no evidence of either remains. The existing heating system is an oil-fired, hot air furnace dating from the 1950s. A cold-air return shaft for this system is built into the dining room's southeast corner.

Ventilation occurred by use of the windows and covered porches with ventilators original in the basement and attic as well.

There is no air conditioning in the building, either current or original.

- b. Lighting: No original lighting fixtures remain in the house. Existing fixtures date from the mid 20th century and are located in the kitchen, bath and hallway.
- c. Plumbing: The plumbing systems presently in the house date from the third quarter of the 20th century. The most recent is the powder room beneath the main staircase. The main bathroom is located in the small second floor room at the front of the stair hall. It appears to have been installed originally in the 1940s or 50s. The kitchen plumbing appears to date from the same period. The water intake system consists of galvanized pipe with some later repairs made with copper pipe. The waste water system is of galvanized pipe with some repairs made of PVC. No evidence of any earlier systems remains.

9. Original furnishings: No furniture, draperies or carpets original to the structure have been located.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces due south and is set about 75 feet north of the north edge of Showalter Road. The surrounding landscape is rich, generally level limestone agricultural land located near the center of the east-west axis of the Cumberland Valley. Since the late 1940s, an airport and an aircraft manufacturing concern have been located to the northeast of the house. The airport and newer industries adjacent to it are growing and have encroached upon the property. About 0.3 mile to the west is Interstate highway 81, which is visible from the house.

The southern orientation of the house, typical of the region's rural construction, is designed to maximize the warming affect of the sun. The south facing front and the double porch in the east are designed to have maximum exposure in the winter. The purpose of double porches such as the one on this house was to catch the early sun's warmth in a recessed protected area in the winter when the sun was lower in the sky and to shade

the wall from the sun's heat in the summer months when the sun is higher. This design helped to keep the work area of the house, the kitchen, more comfortable year around.

2. Historic landscape design: According to the Phase I Archeological Survey of the Herman/Schindel Farm, by R. Christopher Goodwin and Associates, Inc. dated April, 1989, the large trees and shrubbery near the house are all less than 100 years old. The yews and boxwood around the house foundation would appear to date from the mid 20th century, probably having been planted in the 1940s. The larger ash trees are typical of the sort of shade trees planted in house yards in the 19th century.

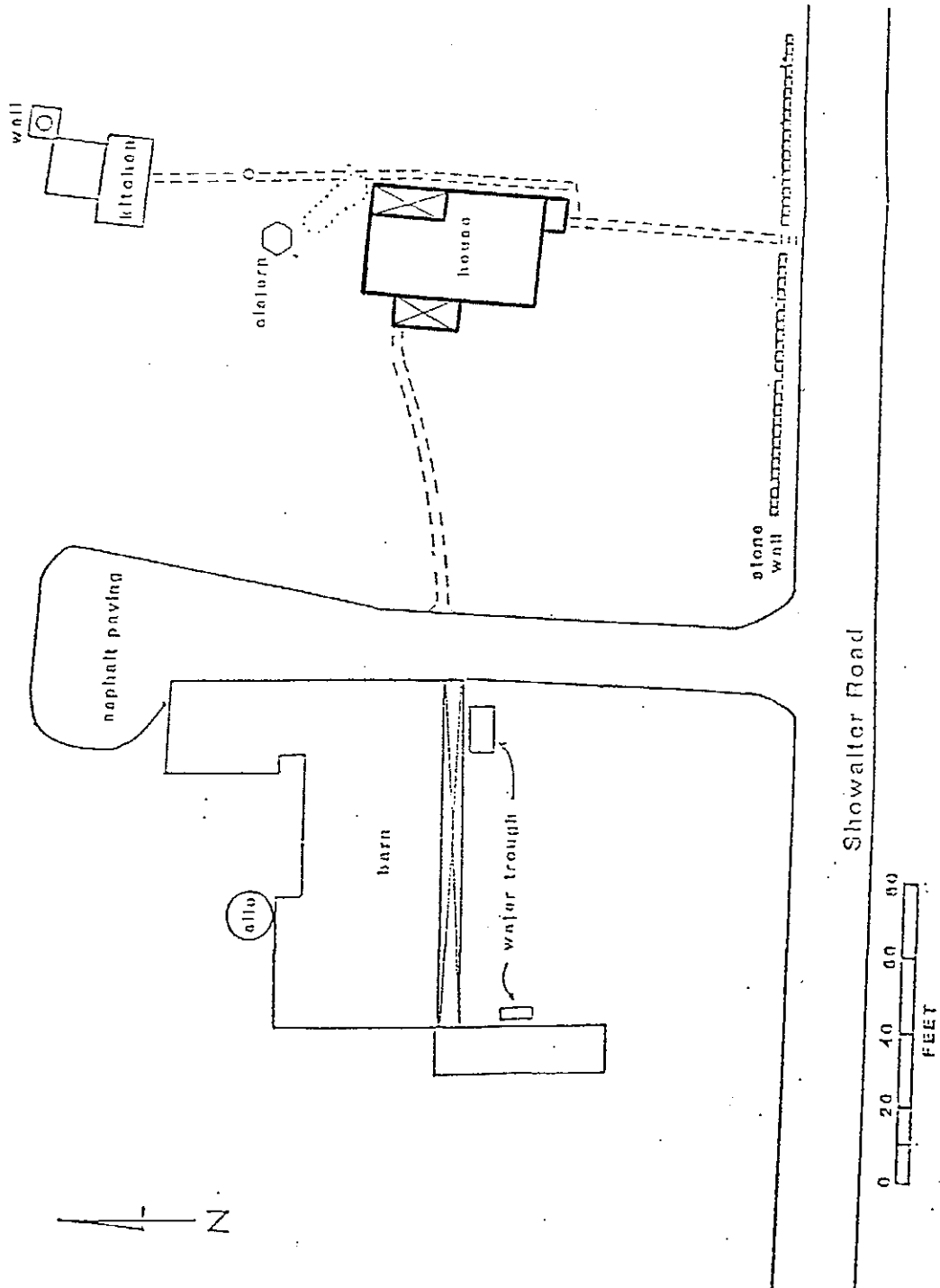
The walk now leading from the kitchen to the wash house is poured concrete, but it could well mark the location of an older stone or brick walk. The same is true of walks leading from the barn to the house and from Showalter Road to the house.

The stone wall along the front of the property appears to date from the mid 20th century but could be a rebuilding of an older fence.

3. Outbuildings: The only free-standing outbuilding in the complex is a wash house which will be discussed as HABS NO. MD-993-C.

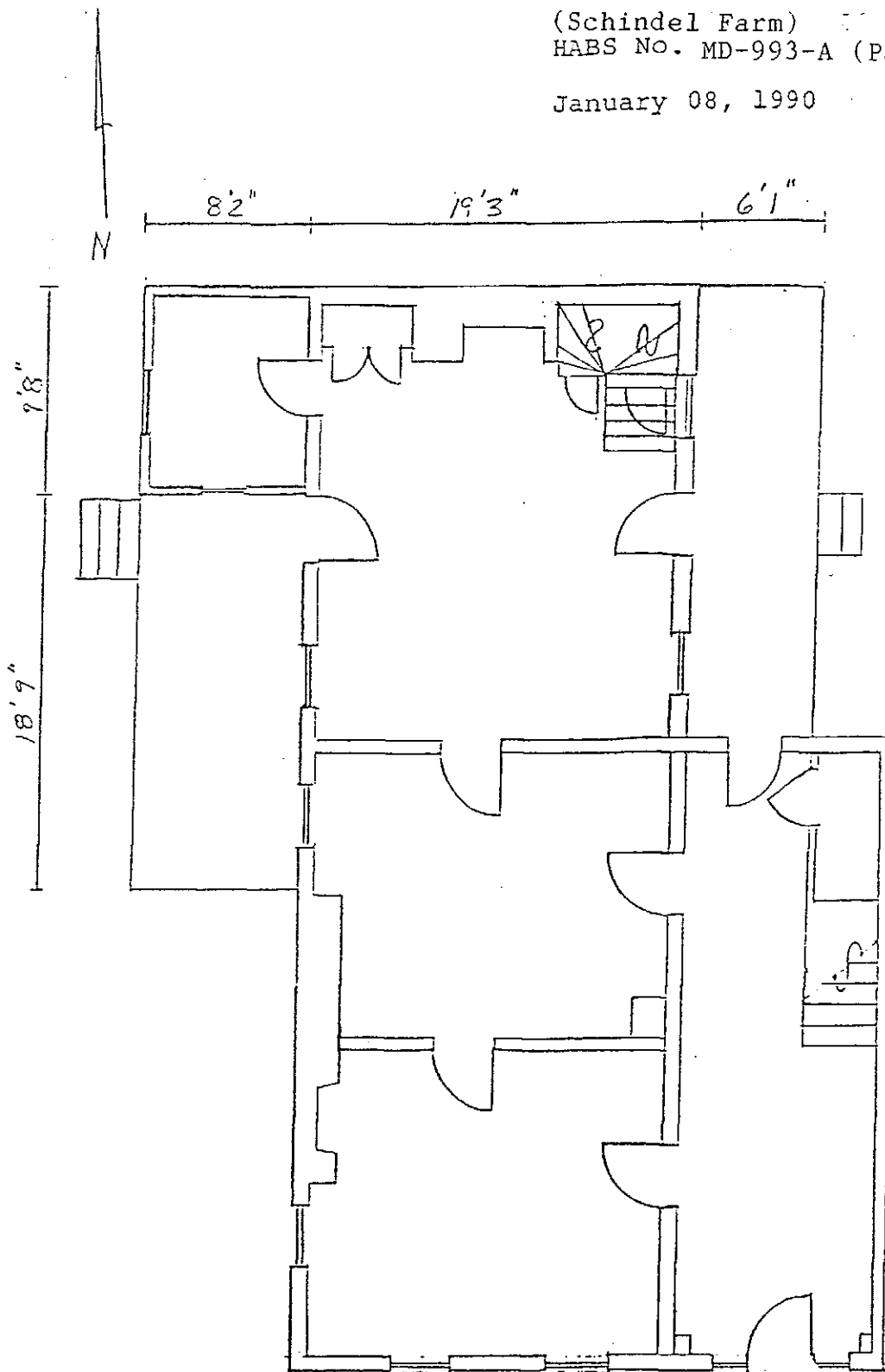
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HERMAN FARM, Building A
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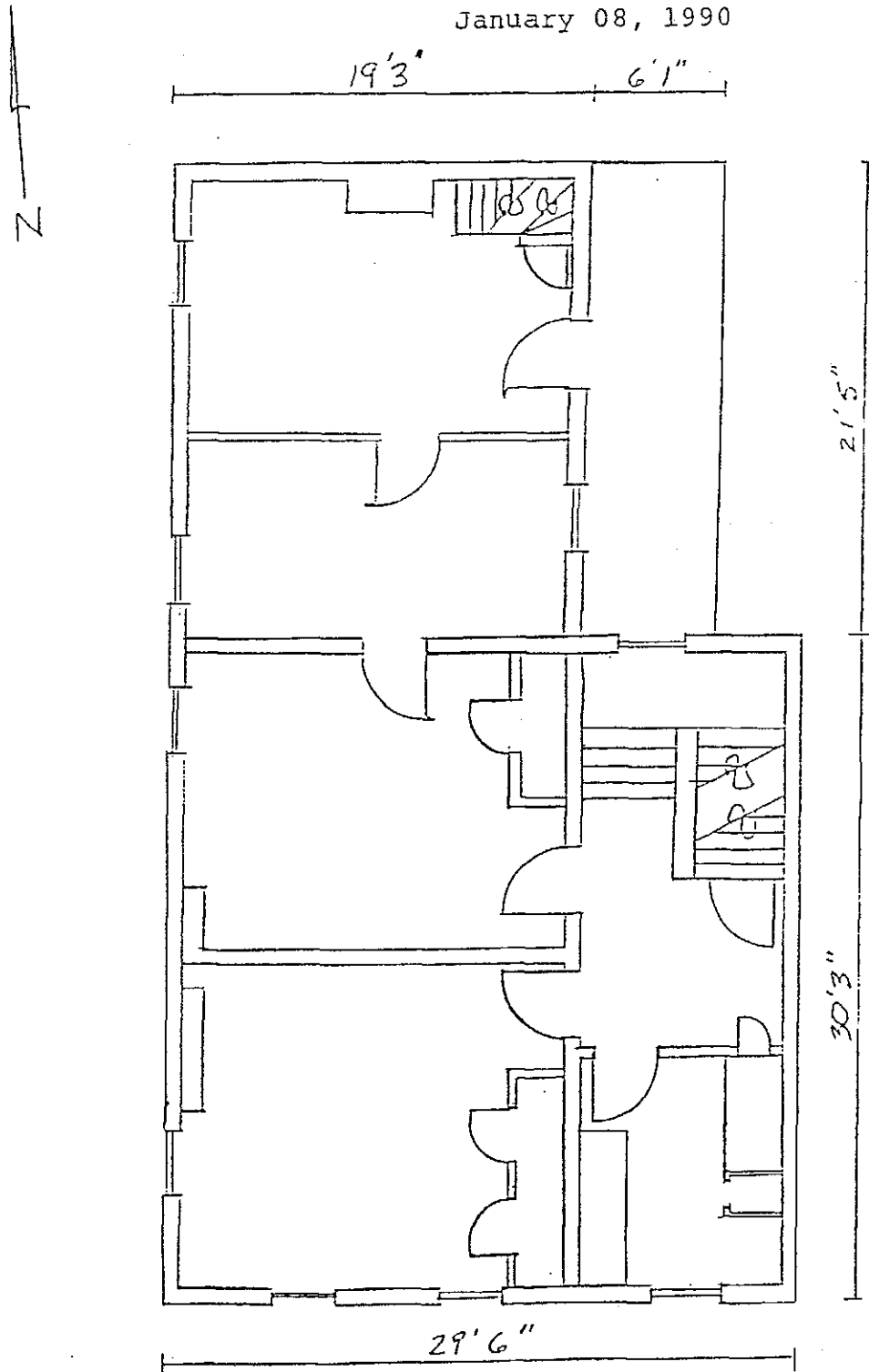
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FIRST FLOOR

NOT TO SCALE

January 08, 1990



SECOND FLR

NOT TO SCALE